842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.

843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "tərrəkkäs" - she has become impure; "rägäma" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädin nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "mäcänät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

843 574 844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("arrəs" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "arag" period (usually 80 days) is over. During [304] this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

● 847 During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adär" (discharged dirty part), also called "yäenqedä lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, woman emerge from the huts shouting "allel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wogäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotam" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wäshäla", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "qurzam" (uncircumcised).

000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convalescense ("ïïzzan ala") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha";
756 women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach
757 the "dabtarä" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

814 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("ïïwash"), "balä mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogsit"), modern "dresser" ("astamami"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new
757 laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

*757 by spontaneously shouting out the agent's name ("yi-
*192 liliyt waf").

Narratives describing supplementary household therapies are included in Appendix A.

OTHER LAY THERAPISTS

*759 The Midwife. The midwife (awalaj) is always a woman, since it is forbidden for a man to look on, let alone
*759 handle, a woman's genitals. Towards the end of the
843 eighth month of pregnancy, counted from the cessation of menses, the parturient woman consults a midwife. The awalaj examines the abdomen from the perspective of size and shape, and listens to the abdomenal wall for sounds of life and other signs of fetal movement.[8] During the latter half of the ninth month, the midwife reckons the position of the fetus, and if this is found inappropriate she reaches into the vagina and attempts to manipulate the fetus into a desireable attitude. The session concludes with directions that the expectant mother must
• 844 henceforth sleep only on her back. Once labor pains begin, the midwife is called. With the assistance of the

[8] Failure to perceive signs of fetal life suggests the possibility of a zar-caused ailment.

841 woman's kinswomen who hold her down, the midwife repeatedly massages the woman's abdomen until the baby has emerged. The umbilical cord is knotted close to the baby and again near the mother, and then severed in the middle. The midwife then squeezes the woman's abdomen to eject the afterbirth, inserts her hand up the vagina to extract any remaining portion, and then passes the organ to an assistant who takes it outside
846 for burial. The midwife then turns to the infant, washes it and carefully "shapes" its eyes, nose, and head into desireable conformations. Finally, the mother's body is washed.

*759 844 The midwife's therapy is conspicuously lacking in the secret and magical elements characteristic of herbalist therapies. It is, in addition, the only Amhara medical specialty which can be acquired without formal tuteledge, by observing and assisting established midwives in delivering infants.

843 844 [821] [845] [776] Pregnancy and childbirth are considered dangerous experiences. Gerifta is a special threat: Nakedness under the sun may cause the fetus to turn in the womb and threaten breach birth, and urinating in the sun can induce premature labor. Childbirth is sometimes the setting for divine punishment by means of breach birth. The pregnant woman is also a favorite victim of ganels, typically, she experiences great hemorrhaging, severe

pain, loss of her senses, inability to move her limbs in an often fatal ailment known as sarakian. The midwife is powerless in these contingencies; instead, it is the herbalist or debtera who must be consulted. Thus, the sinj medhaniyt awakiy provides an infusion which the post-partuitive mother drinks to ejeet a recalcitrant afterbirth (sinj), and the yidemaketir kitabiy provides an herbal amulet to be tied around the waist of the female suffering from post-partum hemorrhaging (demaketir).

The cupper. The cupper (agamiy) assumes either of two therapeutic strategies, depending upon the ailment he is treating. Like the herbalist, he may attempt to draw the pathogenic substance out from the sickman's body. For severe headache (ras mitat: literally, head-gerifta), he shaves a circle of one inch diameter on the sickman's occiput, makes a single incision with a razor or other favored knife, places his cup of horn over the incision, sucks out a required number of hornfulls (usually three) of blood, and pours the blood into a waiting basin of water. The extruded blood is then examined for clotting (tikur waha: dark water) which is regarded as evidence that the pathogenic substance is being removed. Later that day, the agamiy returns to repeat his therapy. The occiput is chosen for bleeding because of its proximity to the body's blood reservoir (yidem sir), located at the nape.